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My name is James Donohue and I am here today to give testimony in support of House Bill, HB 5277 AN ACT LEGALIZING AND REGULATING MIXED MARTIAL ARTS. Ever since the first Mixed Martial Arts (aka MMA) bill was introduced several years ago I have been coming to the State House in an effort to educate legislators in regards to the benefits of legalizing and regulating the sport of MMA. Over the years I have found that participant safety and revenue generation are of particular importance.

First and foremost MMA is a combat sport. However, in regulating MMA the State would seek to provide a managed and safe environment in which the participants can gain valuable experience with limited exposure to danger. Through the licensing of properly trained referees, mandates for medical staff presence, equipment inspections, and fighter physicals, the State can ensure the safety of the fighters and enjoyment of the fans. Despite what some may describe as violence unchecked, the sport of MMA is as safe, if not safer than, boxing or other unarmed combat sports. The unified rules of MMA require the stoppage of fights where a fighter cannot *intelligently defend himself*. Instead of giving a downed fighter time to temporarily regain his wits, only to be struck again, the fight is immediately stopped when that fighter fails to adequately protect themselves. As well, a fight may be won with the use of a submission move wherein the opposing fighter may tap out, or quit with honor, before any damage is done and without a single strike landing.

Additionally, the legalization of MMA will allow events to take place throughout the state thereby creating direct revenue generation to the state from the licensing of fighters and team members, as well as, event taxes and fees. The greatest economic benefit will be seen by the local businesses that gain significant increases of customers in and around the time of the event. Event centers such as the XL center must hire additional staff to work the event and local hotels and restaurants see a boon to sales as out of town visitors require food and lodging. To be certain, large events promoted by the UFC would bring substantial one time revenue boosts, but it is the smaller and local promoter which will generate revenue year round for more rural businesses. In legalizing MMA the state opens a revenue stream previously untapped.

It should be understood by this body that the MMA community is seeking regulation by the State. It invites the reasonable restrictions that accompany such regulation and hopes only to foster a working relationship that is mutually beneficial. In passing this bill the State finds an additional revenue stream with minor initial cost to the taxpayer, and the MMA community gains the support commensurate with other combat sports.